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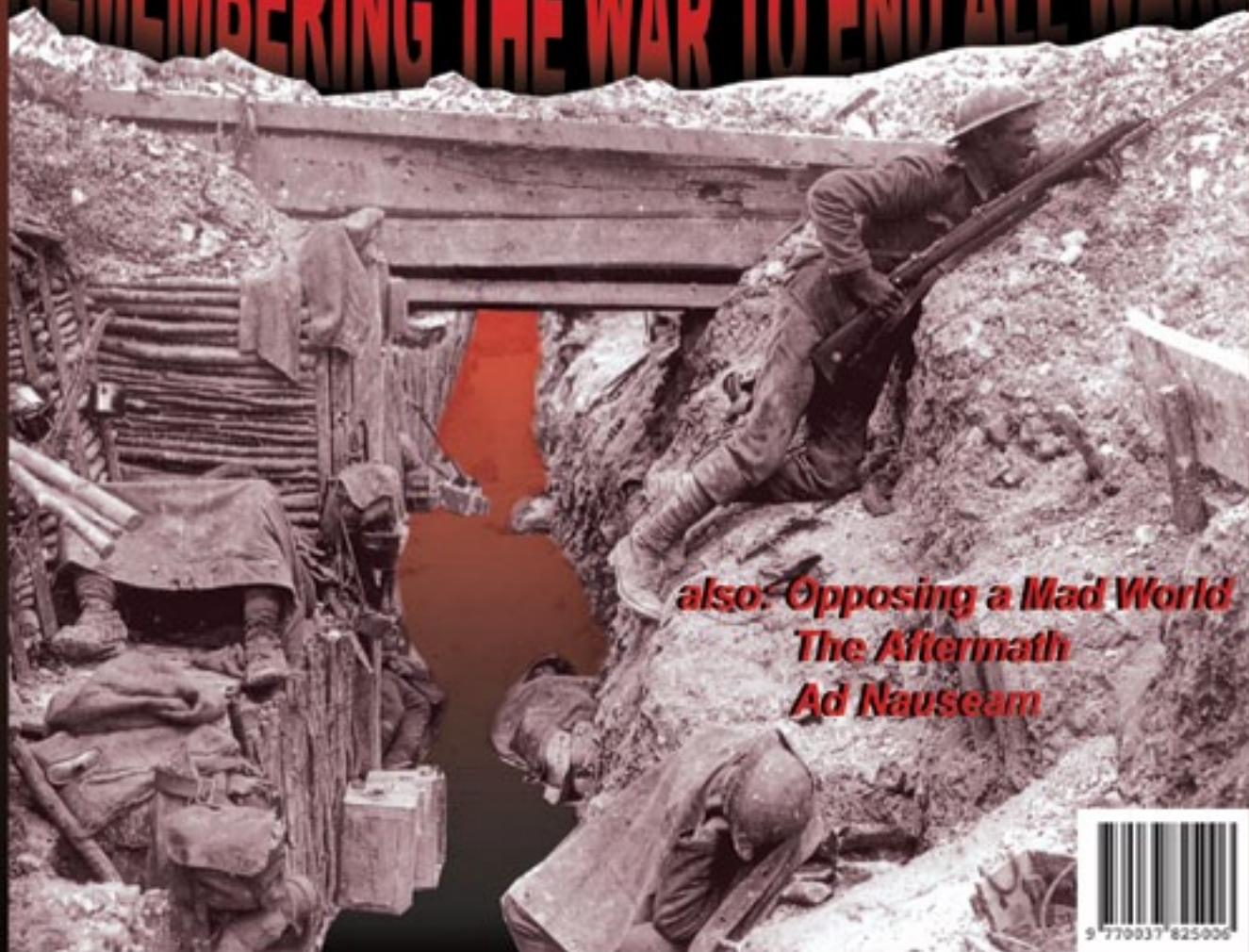
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Journal of The Socialist Party of Great Britain

Companion Party of the World Socialist Movement



REMEMBERING THE WAR TO END ALL WARS



*also: Opposing a Mad World
The Aftermath
Ad Nauseam*



socialist standard

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Introducing the Socialist Party

The Socialist Party advocates a society where production is freed from the artificial constraints of profit and organised for the benefit of all on the basis of material abundance. It does not have policies to ameliorate aspects of the existing social system. It is opposed to all war.

The *Socialist Standard* is the combative monthly journal of the Socialist Party, published without interruption since 1904. In the 1930s the *Socialist Standard* explained why capitalism would not collapse of its own accord, in response to widespread claims to the contrary, and continues to hold this view in face of the notion's recent popularity. Beveridge's welfare measures of the 1940s were viewed as a reorganisation of poverty and a necessary 'expense' of production, and Keynesian policies designed to overcome slumps an illusion. Today, the journal exposes as false the view that banks create money out of thin air, and explains

why actions to prevent the depredation of the natural world can have limited effect and run counter to the nature of capitalism itself.

Gradualist reformers like the Labour Party believed that capitalism could be



transformed through a series of social measures, but have merely become routine managers of the system. The Bolsheviks had to be content with developing Russian capitalism under a one-party dictatorship. Both failures have given socialism a quite different -- and

unattractive -- meaning: state ownership and control. As the *Socialist Standard* pointed out before both courses were followed, the results would more properly be called state capitalism.

The Socialist Party and the World Socialist Movement affirm that capitalism is incapable of meaningful change in the interests of the majority; that the basis of exploitation is the wages/money system. The *Socialist Standard* is proud to have kept alive the original idea of what socialism is -- a classless, stateless, wageless, moneyless society or, defined positively, a democracy in which free and equal men and women co-operate to produce the things they need to live and enjoy life, to which they have free access in accordance with the principle 'from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs'

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Editorial

The First World War Slaughter

The First World War was a classic 'imperialist' war. Although billed by one side as a war against 'Prussian militarism' and by the other as against 'Russian barbarism', it was basically a war for a re-division of the world amongst rival imperialist powers.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century Britain and France had consolidated colonial empires in Africa and Asia, providing them with protected sources of raw materials, markets and investment outlets. As a late-comer that had only become a unified state in 1871, Germany had to be content with bits and pieces here and there and wanted 'a place in the sun' commensurate with its industrial and trading strength -- a place that could only be obtained at the expense of Britain and France.

In the Balkans, the Hapsburg and Tsarist dynastic empires had long been vying with each other for control and influence over the successor states to the crumbling Ottoman Empire. It was in fact an incident in this strategic rivalry that sparked off the war -- the assassination on 28 June 1914 of the Austrian Crown Prince by a Serbian nationalist. Austria declared war on Serbia. Its ally, Germany, joined it. Within

six weeks Germany and Austria were at war with Russia, France and Britain. So began over four years of mass slaughter and destruction in Europe on the altar of capitalist interests, with skirmishes in the Middle East and Africa.

The media are now whipping us up to celebrate the ending of this mass slaughter in the glorious victory of the morally justified side -- Britain and France, who not only retained their empires but extended them at the expense of the Ottoman empire and taking over Germany's colonies. Germany lost everything and the Austro-Hungarian empire was broken up. But it didn't settle the matter. Twenty years later capitalist Germany had a second, more desperate and aggressive go at trying to re-divide the world at the expense of capitalist Britain and France.

There are two lessons to be learned from this.

First, that capitalism is a war-prone economic and social system. Built into it are conflicts of capitalist interest over sources of raw materials, investment outlets, markets, trade routes and strategic areas and points to protect these. Hence the First World War, the

Second World War, and all the lesser wars in between and since.

Second, those who did the fighting, killing and destroying, and died or were maimed, have been mere cannon-fodder in these wars. They were duped or conscripted to kill and destroy for interests other than their own.

Knowing what the war was really about -- and having opposed it at the time -- we in the Socialist Party are not taking part in the celebrations. We will however be remembering the millions who died or were maimed fighting for capitalist interests; the millions of civilians who died as a result of the privation and disease brought about by the war; and the buildings, infrastructure and historical sites destroyed. Capitalism has a lot to answer for.



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PATHFINDERS

Monkey Dramas

PEOPLE SOMETIMES ask ‘who will do the dirty work in socialism?’, but socialism is not likely to have any work that’s as dirty as some of the jobs people currently do in capitalism. War is an obvious example. One dirty job is a very recent phenomenon and it does involve going down drains into filth, but in a strictly virtual sense. Facebook employs around 7,500 content moderators who are charged with the task of reviewing uploaded content which has been flagged as ‘unsuitable’ either by the automated software itself or by human users. This content includes images and footage so unpleasant that moderators are screened for ‘resilience’ and offered free in-work psychology counselling, though in the earlier days of MySpace the counselling was limited to trainers advising ‘It’s ok to walk out, it’s ok to cry. Just don’t throw up on my floor’. What impression such work must give of the human race hardly requires much imagination: ‘I didn’t shake anyone’s hand for three years. I’d seen what people do and how disgusting they are. I didn’t want to touch anyone. I was disgusted by humanity’ (‘An online decency moderator’s advice: Blur your eyes’, BBC News, 14 October).

Perhaps inevitably, social media companies have come in for criticism for not doing enough for their moderators’ mental health, and one former employee is suing Facebook after developing post-traumatic stress disorder due to exposure to a constant stream of imagery involving ‘child sexual abuse, torture, bestiality and beheadings’ (‘Facebook moderator sues over ‘beheading stress’, BBC News, 25 September).

Socialists are opposed to censorship, however there aren’t many of us who would be willing to put ourselves or our kids through what these moderators have had to see. While we argue that there is no such thing as an ‘evil human nature’, we can’t pretend like blind Pollyannas that humans are paragons of adorable fluffiness. Human history says otherwise, again and again. Some humans are just vile, and no special pleading can mitigate that vileness.

For some, the events of the Second World War and the Holocaust are enough to make them give up on the idea of socialism. Not many people, apart from some literalist Christians, still believe in original sin, but there is a common suspicion that in most cases it wouldn’t take much to turn the mildest-mannered bank clerk into a serial killer. Perhaps

we’re all potentially monsters, held in check only by the coercive power of the state and the (in the UK anyway) relative unavailability of automatic weapons.

Believers in this secular form of original sin are wont to cite two famous psychology experiments which seem to show scientifically that anyone can be turned into a monster with alarming ease – the 1960s Milgram ‘torture’ experiment and the 1971 Stanford prison experiment.

But as has been noted previously in this column (October 2014), these two experiments were anything but rigorous and scientific, and the headline conclusions which made them famous were not supported by the actual test results. In the Milgram experiment, where subjects were told to electrocute a ‘victim’ whenever they got a question wrong, up to 50 percent refused to comply. Of those who did comply, some wept openly as they pressed the button to deliver the shock. Subsequent interviews revealed that these subjects were badgered by the experimenter who told them that science and the good of humanity



depended on their compliance. Rather than being vindictive monsters, the subjects were cowed by the authority of the experimenter and Yale University’s credentials, and by the well-attested human inclination to conform to perceived norms. Others said they were convinced the Yale experiment was a fake to begin with, on the plausible grounds that an Ivy League university was not going to squander its reputation by torturing people.

Gina Perry, the researcher who exposed this appalling pseudo-scientific stunt back in 2012, has followed up with a study of the Zimbardo prison experiment, pointing out that not only did two thirds of the ‘guards’ refuse to torture the ‘prisoners’ as requested (!), but that those who obeyed the instruction felt obliged to do so because they were being paid and

told how to behave. Many of the ‘guards’ subsequently said they felt angry that they had been duped and manipulated (*New Scientist*, 13 October).

The enduring fame of these two dodgy experiments undoubtedly owes everything to the fact that people love hearing about how bad humans are, and this is a crucial part of the ideology of the rich who rule over us. Without rulers to dispense justice and punishment, we are reliably assured through every medium from the *Daily Mail* to murder dramas, we will certainly descend to barbarism and then extinction.

At one time this notion of ‘scientific’ original sin extended to primates too. London Zoo in 1932 witnessed a phenomenon which became known as The Massacre at Monkey Hill and caused global headlines. A new open-air baboon enclosure was the scene of an astonishing seven-year bloodbath and started a trend in anthropology based on the notion of the ‘killer ape’. In fact the Monkey Hill debacle was due to human ignorance. Staff packed 94 harem-loving male baboons into a space which, in the

wild, would have accommodated only one, and then accidentally included six females. The violence that ensued was so bad that staff could not enter the enclosure to remove the bodies. So infatuated did lab researchers and wider society become with this violent ‘killer ape’ stereotype that it was decades before pioneering young field researchers like Jane Goodall were able to overturn it with the simple observation that primates including baboons do not behave this way in the wild. As a recent 2016 article puts it, ‘trying to generalise about primate

behaviour based on Monkey Hill would be like trying to learn about human nature by watching a prison riot’ (priceonomics.com/the-massacre-at-monkey-hill).

The ‘human nature’ argument is one of the most enduring pieces of propaganda ever levelled at socialists, and it remains popular because in some masochistic way people want to believe the worst of themselves. But it plays directly into the hands of our self-appointed and self-serving rulers. In reality there is nothing in human nature that predisposes us to violence, or against socialism, and the vast majority of workers are nothing like the anti-human caricature that the capitalist media promotes through its shlock-horror reporting and its endless obsession with those TV murder dramas.

PJS

LETTERS

Getting rid of capitalism

Hi,

Doesn’t seem like there’s much to reply to, you mention the book in the first paragraph (‘How to destroy capitalism’, *Socialist Standard*, September) but don’t actually discuss any of the points it makes.

A question for you: in the last 150 odd years, Marxist approaches to creating ‘society wide political and workplace action’ haven’t been successful to say the least. Capitalism is still very much alive and kicking. You say ending capitalism will come from a majority vote, but a tiny and shrinking handful of people vote for socialist programmes. What reasons do you have to think the same slogans and organising models will be more successful in the future?

Cheers,

Shahin (author of *Capitalism. What It Is and How Can We Destroy It?*)

Reply:

The article was not meant specifically to be a review of your book, only to answer the same question you posed in the title.

We can’t deny that capitalism is still alive and kicking, but this means that *all* the various theories as to how to get rid of capitalism have not been successful, not just Marxist, but anarchist, syndicalist, Leninist and reformist ones too.

We do indeed say that capitalism can only be ended when a majority is in favour of this and takes deliberate, democratic action to bring it about; which involves more than merely voting for it – it also involves organising democratically outside parliament. This is because socialism, as a society without economic or political coercion, could only be sustained by people willingly cooperating and participating in its running. Socialism is a democratic cooperative society that can only come into being democratically, i.e., with majority support and participation.

That is what we are working towards. There is no other way.

Correction

Unfortunately the opening paragraph of the article on Conspiracy-Theory in last month’s *Socialist Standard* came out garbled. It should have read: “Conspiracy-theory, or conspiracism, has it that much of the world today is to be understood in terms of ‘conspiracy’ be it by scientists, extra-terrestrials, masons, or whoever.”



If such a majority does not emerge then socialism won’t and capitalism will continue. – *Editors*.

Bone and Mogg

What does the SPGB have to say about the debacle on LBC radio in September about Ian Bone re Jacob Rees-Mogg and his crappy children? From what I heard on LBC Ian Bone called Mogg ‘a horrible person’ and said it to his children. LBC demonised Ian Bone for this.

J.S., London SW4

Reply:

Ian Bone and Class War have always specialised in anti-rich stunts but it is the capitalist *system* that is to blame for the lot of the majority class of wage and salary workers not individual members of the capitalist class such as Jacob Rees-Mogg. He may (or may not) be a horrible person – he comes across as a caricature of a toff and so an obvious target for a Class War stunt – but that is completely irrelevant. Remove him and replace him by a ‘nice’ capitalist and it would make no difference. Should Ian Bone have targeted Mogg’s children? Maybe, but only to tell them that capitalism is a horrible system – *Editors*.

Correction

Hi,

The September *Socialist Standard* and its obituary of Ron Stone states that he was a poet and wrote the poem ‘Wage Restraint’ which was published in the Eighties.

That particular poem was actually written by Roger Woddis under the title of, ‘How They Solved the Economic Crisis’ and was published in either the *New Statesman* or *Punch*. It later appeared in the book, *The Woddis Collection* first published in 1978 by Barrie & Jenkins 24 Highbury Crescent, London, N5 1RX.

Richard Layton

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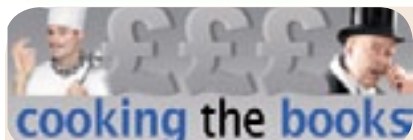
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State Capitalism

For a week in September BBC Radio Four ran a series of short lunch-time programmes on 'The New Age of Capitalism'. On the Wednesday (19 September) the theme was 'state capitalism'. The presenter, David Grossman, began by reading a dictionary definition of 'capitalism':

'An economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit rather than the state.'

And then asked if the term 'state capitalism' was not therefore a contradiction. His answer was that it wasn't. In fact the term is routinely used now, particularly in relation to China as, for instance, by the then Australian Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull earlier this year (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 April).

Grossman's two guests identified two kinds of state capitalism. (1) where the state controls major companies producing for profit, and (2) where the state intervenes in the capitalist economy to direct and develop it. China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea were given as examples of the first kind. Singapore,

Taiwan, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates and, perhaps surprisingly, Norway were given as examples of the second, on the ground of having built up substantial 'sovereign wealth funds' (hence Norway's inclusion) which were used to further develop capitalism in their country. State intervention in general was traced back to the implementation of policies advocated by Keynes.

The term 'state capitalism' has been part of the socialist vocabulary since the end of the nineteenth century to refer to industries and services, producing for profit and employing wage workers, such as the Post Office in Britain and railways on the Continent. Marx himself wrote of 'state capital, in so far as governments employ productive wage-labour in mines, railways, etc., and function as industrial capitalists' (*Capital*, Vol 2, ch. 3).

So, the programme was a welcome advance in understanding – as far as it went. Because it didn't go the whole hog. China was said to have become a state capitalist country only from 1979. So what was it from 1949 to 1979? One of the guests used the word 'socialist' in reference to this period. There was certainly a change of policy on the part of the Chinese government in 1979 but what existed before then also had 'state capitalist' features – industry and trade were controlled by state companies producing for the market and employing

wage-labour.

The difference was that, while after 1979 the remit of these companies was to make a profit at company level, before then the government's aim was to increase the surplus (make an overall profit) at national level. The same system had existed in the old USSR. Which was why we described both pre-1979 China and the USSR as state capitalism.

The programme, however, exhibited a better understanding of state capitalism than Lenin or Trotsky who, basically, accepted only the programme's second definition – the use of the state to direct and develop capitalism. This was the policy, which he openly called 'state capitalism', that Lenin advocated the Bolshevik government should adopt but which they were unable to implement until after the civil war in Russia was over in 1921.

Although Grossman rejected the dictionary definition of capitalism, he did not offer a corrected version. It would not have needed much change, to for instance:

'Capitalism is an economic and social system in which trade and industry are controlled by private owners or the state for profit.'

This would also require a change in dictionary definitions of socialism, to eliminate any reference to state ownership and control. But that's another matter.

WOOD FOR THE TREES

Invisible Elephants

WHILST DEBATING the reasons for the existence of homeless people in one of England's most prosperous cities I was berated for bringing 'capitalism' into every conversation. I was told that if I was to go to the local shelter for the homeless they would inform me of reasons for their plight that had no connection with some political abstraction named capitalism. This is symptomatic of one of the dominant ideology's greatest magic tricks; making capitalism invisible. Even those most affected by the malevolence of the system are usually quite unaware of its existence; to them their plight is just part of what it is to be 'down on your luck' or the result of 'an addiction to alcohol' etc. This form of political ignorance is very convenient for those who defend 'the market system' or 'representative democracy' – the term capitalism is rarely used by those who defend it because to do so would allow the possibility of an alternative. Because capitalism is everywhere it is nowhere. How has the system pulled off this startling illusion?

There are degrees of propaganda; from downright lies to nuances of emphasis. The invisibility of capitalism goes far beyond this realm of conscious manipulation of data and its interpretation – it has become 'ideological'. In the Marxist sense this is a political concept that has been transformed into a collection of values and behaviours that appear almost 'instinctive'. To question the existence of money, the nation-state, profit or wage slavery is to invite ridicule from those who have been conditioned by bourgeois ideology. This ubiquity of perspective has been achieved through a form of historical osmosis; the debates that raged during the transition to capitalism are hardly remembered, and if they are it is considered only to be of esoteric historical interest.

Capitalism arose simultaneously with the rise of science as the dominant description of the world. Among many of the ways of thinking that were adopted by the rising capitalist class were those that we might call 'pseudo-scientific'. It became *de rigueur* in any analysis to deconstruct a given phenomenon into its smallest constituent parts. The world was seen as being built up from the small to the large. Economics, for instance, could best be understood in terms of small family or community economic activity which could be then extrapolated into a national or even global economic theory. Even today

you still hear economists refer to 'good housekeeping' as being the paradigm of a successful economy. In contrast to this socialists have always based their understanding on seeing within the small a reflection of the large. The imposed economic realities on the 'household' – wage slavery, consumerism, saving up to give their children a future, paying rent or a mortgage etc. would seem absurd and counter-intuitive without some understanding of the global market system and its laws of exploitation and exchange. The so-called 'Robinson Crusoe' explanation of basic human

economic activity is nonsense because of the absence of the primary reality of capitalism which is *social* production and trade.

Seeing homelessness as somehow the fault of the homeless is like blaming you and the purchase of your garden chair for causing global deforestation. One may be a contributing factor within the other but without an understanding of the global system of production for profit (capitalism) it is impossible to see why consumerism *necessitates* the destruction of the environment. It's the same with homelessness – sleeping in the doorways of empty buildings is symptomatic of the market system. It may be true that nobody has a 'right' to be housed but it is surely equally true that nobody has a 'right' to deny housing to those who desperately need it.

Capitalism destroys human rational and moral agency in the guise of a reality that is purely an ideological illusion; or to put it another way, private property exists to restrict the producers from access to their own products. On countless building sites across the country we see the working class creating estates for wages that will hardly enable them to retain their own homes which were in turn built by them. A 'mortgage' chains them into this never-ending cycle of alienated labour and is one of the reasons for the demise of so-called social housing building provision. The threat of eviction and homelessness is that much more vivid for those with mortgages, in contrast to social housing rents, because it is much more difficult to access housing benefit. For the capitalists this is a win-win situation because mortgages are usually considerably higher than council rents with the added bonus that the tenants are more fearful of eviction and so that much more compliant for higher exploitation at work – many of them creating homes for the same financial motives and so perpetuating the nightmare. The whole corrupt, insane system exists because it is a 'cash-cow' for the rich and for no other reason.

The next time you see someone step over the body of another who is 'sleeping rough', as if the recumbent body was merely another item of street furniture, put aside all of your economic text books which tell you why capitalism is so wonderful and see that casual callous action as a consequence of an ideological ignorance manufactured for you, alongside your iPhone and stylish footwear, by capitalism.

WEZ



9

THE GREAT WAR



The Socialist Party contends that there are only two classes in present-day society. Firstly, the working class majority who collectively produce the wealth of society but who, in order to live, have to sell their ability to work for a wage or a salary. Second, the capitalist class who are the small minority who accumulate profit through economic exploitation of the working class. This situation leads to an inevitable conflict of interests and the generation of social and economic problems that cannot be solved within the present social arrangements. Commodity production – production for sale with a view to profit -- leads to conflict between producers over access to markets and sources of raw materials, and for the control of trade routes and spheres of influence. From time to time this clash of interests breaks out in armed conflict. To the Socialist Party, ‘capitalism and war are inseparable. There can be no capitalism without conflicts of economic interest’ (*War and the Working Class*, 1936).

Within a year of its founding the Socialist Party had published an article putting its view on war:

‘I do not think it will be questioned by any socialist that it is his duty to oppose the wars of the ruling class of one nation with the ruling class of another, and refuse to participate in them’ (*Socialist Standard*, August 1905).

Before the mass slaughter of the First World War the Socialist Party argued that, because wars were the outcome of economic conflicts between the capitalists of the various nations, it was illogical to attempt to abolish war while the economic conflicts remained. International congresses at Copenhagen and elsewhere to ensure ‘universal disarmament’ were doomed to failure. It was clear that:

‘... the “anti-war campaign”, as such, is, from the working class standpoint, absurd. Just as the class struggle cannot be abolished

save by abolishing classes, so it is impossible for capitalist nations to get rid of the grim spectre of war, for Capitalism presupposes economic conflicts which must finally be fought out with the aid of the armed forces of the State’ (*Socialist Standard*, August 1910).

The view that capitalism causes war was not held exclusively by the Socialist Party. Other parties said much the same thing and, like the Socialist Party, called for the international solidarity of the working class. However, when the war broke out in 1914 their nationalism proved a stronger force than their socialism.

To its disgust, but not to its surprise, the Socialist Party saw workers and their leaders line up behind their respective governments. Labour leaders such as Hardie, Macdonald and Lansbury assured the government that ‘...the head office of the Party, its entire machinery, are to be placed at the disposal of the Government in their recruiting campaign.’

The Socialist Party angrily denounced the war as none of the workers’ business. It was a war of capitalist interests, and:

‘...the workers’ interests are not bound up in the struggle for markets wherein their masters may dispose of the wealth they have stolen from them (the workers), but in the struggle to end the system under which they are robbed... The Socialist Party of Great Britain... declaring that no interests are at stake justifying the shedding of a single drop of working class blood, enters its emphatic protest against the brutal and bloody butchery of our brothers in this and other lands...

‘Having no quarrel with the working class of any country, we extend to our fellow workers of all lands the expression of our good will and Socialist fraternity, and pledge ourselves to work for the overthrow of capitalism and the triumph of Socialism.’

In common with most political parties the Socialist Party carried on a vigorous programme of indoor and outdoor

propaganda meetings. From street corners and open spaces Party speakers on platforms propounded the socialist case against war. There survives in the Party archive a bound minute book recording outdoor meetings held in North London. One entry reads:

‘September 20th. Saturday. Speaker J. M. Wray. Chair - Sullivan. Time 8.30 to 10.30. Audience about 200. Opposition by Grainger of Daily Herald League supported by several members of B.S.P. in the audience with design of raising prejudice against the SPGB and so of breaking up the meeting. Disorderly meeting.’

Audience size seems to have fluctuated between 100 and 250. The meetings in August 1914 increased in size and the entry ‘Many questions mainly about the war. Good meeting’ occurs a number of times. On Sunday August 30 Wray again addressed an audience this time of around 800:

‘Many questions mainly about the war... Hostility shown by the audience so soon as the speaker began to reply to the opposition and the police closed the meeting leaving Party members to get away with the platform amongst the hostile audience that had closed around it and damaged it one side of the steps torn away and lost thus rendering the platform useless for further propaganda meetings.’

It says a great deal for the character, optimism and bravery of these early members that they could face hostile audiences week after week. Undeterred the branch repaired the platform and were by the end of the week again holding meetings. At a meeting held on October 11 the speaker replied to questions about the war when ‘On the speaker replying to the opposition the audience started the National Anthem and the raising of cheers’ and the meeting had to be abandoned. By early November the initial flush of war fever had apparently calmed down. On November 8 (a Sunday) a crowd of about 500 were reported as an ‘Orderly meeting despite of [sic] hostile element’.

On a Sunday in mid September one Hyde Park meeting was the subject of a concerted attack. The organiser reported:

‘...There was a determined attack made to smash up the meeting. Just as Elliot was closing the meeting the police intervened and told him to close down. As he did not close down as quick as they wished they arrested him. Elliott was charged [deleted] however, charged with insulting the British armies and fined 30/-. The crowd numbered over a thousand and the organised opposition attempted at the conclusion of the meeting to smash [the] platform but only succeeded in doing a little damage to it.’

Some branches reacted to the threat of physical attack by banding together to continue open air meetings sometimes at new venues. In West Ham three branches got together to hold a meeting in Stratford Grove, an area not previously covered by the Party and its limited resources. It was possibly chosen to avoid marauding gangs of jingoists who were well aware of all the regular meeting places where anti-war sentiments might find expression.

Other branches had better luck. The secretary of East London branch reported that they had abandoned a meeting at Victoria Park after an obviously sympathetic park keeper had informed him ‘...that there were eight plain clothes men present for the purpose of arresting the Speaker and the Chairman as soon as the meeting started.’ It would appear that some propaganda meetings were having some effect and it is likely that the Party’s informant had listened to the speakers over a period of time, and was at least unwilling to see its views suppressed.

But speakers did not have to oppose the war from the platform to get into trouble. A man named Baggett reported that he had been arrested and ‘bound over in the surety of £50 to keep off the platform for six months... remarks complained of had reference to Lord Roberts circular [regarding the supply of prostitutes to the British Army in India].’

In 1914 speakers had not only the government and their fellow workers to contend with. Opposition to the war and objection to military service in defence of one’s employers’ interests could incur the wrath of employers – imprisonment was not the only hardship resulting from espousing unpopular views. An early member of the Party could recall a comrade being arrested in Leicester and being jailed for a week. Phoning his employer on his release, in the hope of fobbing him off with a plausible excuse, he discovered that ‘...one of his fellow clerks had obligingly pinned up a report of his case in the manager’s office’.

In view of increasing hostility, and the fact that a number of branches had ceased to hold meetings on account of the difficult situation, the EC had to consider the suspension of outdoor propaganda activity. Every effort had been made to maintain outdoor propaganda meetings but the

‘...brutality of crowds made drunk with patriotism. The prohibitions by the authorities, and the series of police prosecutions of our speakers, compelled the rank and file of the Socialist Party to put an end to the fruitless sacrifices of their spokesmen by stopping outdoor propaganda.’

What decided the matter was the issue by the Government of stringent Defence of the Realm Regulations outlawing the uttering of statements likely to cause disaffection. The decision appears to have been a difficult one as the minutes record that it was taken after a discussion lasting about two hours. The Party at a special meeting held to discuss the situation ratified the decision. There was clearly a small number within the Party opposed to this course of action and willing to ‘tough it out’ but a motion approving of the EC decision was carried by a fairly substantial majority of 75 - 9.

Explaining that ‘...our object was not to bid defiance to a world gone mad, but to place the fact that in this country the Socialist position was faithfully maintained by the Socialists’, the Party continued as best it could. Male members, under tremendous social and economic pressures, took what measures they could to avoid being called up.

How did the Party react when members were arrested, fined or thrown out of work? It must be remembered that in 1914



state welfare provisions were primitive and being put out of work for propagating its message needed more backing than mere expression of sympathy if they were to carry on. The vast majority of members were working men.

It is heartening to read how the Party treated what were in society's view vile miscreants. A. L. Cox reported to the EC that he had been arrested in Nottingham and charged with 'using seditious language and inciting people to riot'. He had been taken to the Guildhall followed by a hooting crowd of about 3,000, which must have been frightening. What is interesting in this instance is that Cox was bound over in the sum of £50 – an extraordinary sum for an ordinary working man with more than a hint of vindictiveness about it. Cox was lucky. The sum had been in part under-written by a member of the BSP who had witnessed the arrest and who had provided the bail. At the hearing he stated '...that he opposed the view of Cox and believed he could be a Socialist and still have a country to defend.' The EC had the good grace to write and thank the man. They also paid the twelve shillings and sixpence [62.5p] court costs and guaranteed the £50 surety.



Some idea of the hand-to-mouth existence of at least some of the members is shown by the fact that Cox reported the following week that he had lost his job on account of his arrest and had been unable to gain another. After paying for the present week's lodgings he said he would be practically penniless. He was advanced £1 by the EC and branches were invited to make voluntary subscriptions to a fund set up to assist the EC in this matter. This brought to light another member in economic difficulties. C. Elliott, a hot water fitter, produced a letter of dismissal from his employer who had given him the sack and stopped two day's pay. Elliott had turned up to work on Monday and told his mate who was in charge of the job that he had to go to appear in court following an arrest for opposing war. His mate said he could not get on with the job on his own and would accompany him to court. He did so but got drunk on the way. The following day Elliott alone turned up for work and could only manage to work until lunch time when he notified the general foreman. His employer got wind of the matter when the absent mate 'gave him away to defend his own conduct in absenting himself'. He, too, was given £1.

Neither of the men took advantage of the Party as they

reported soon after that they had found employment and no longer required assistance although it would have been quite easy to do so in the absence of any way their behaviour could have been monitored.

Conscription into the Armed Forces was a distinct possibility for Party members. When voluntary recruits began to fall in number in 1915 the government turned to the expedient of compulsion to make up the shortfall. Provision was made in the Military Services Acts for the possibility of gaining exemption on the grounds of conscience. This was a provision inserted into the Bill as a sop to the Liberals, some of whom still held to voluntarist and non-interventionist principles. Prime Minister Asquith was in a political crisis and to ensure Liberal support for the passage of the Bill the provision was made with the intention of it applying to persons holding religious views which forbade the taking of human life. The passage in the Bill was badly drafted and caused the authorities no end of trouble.

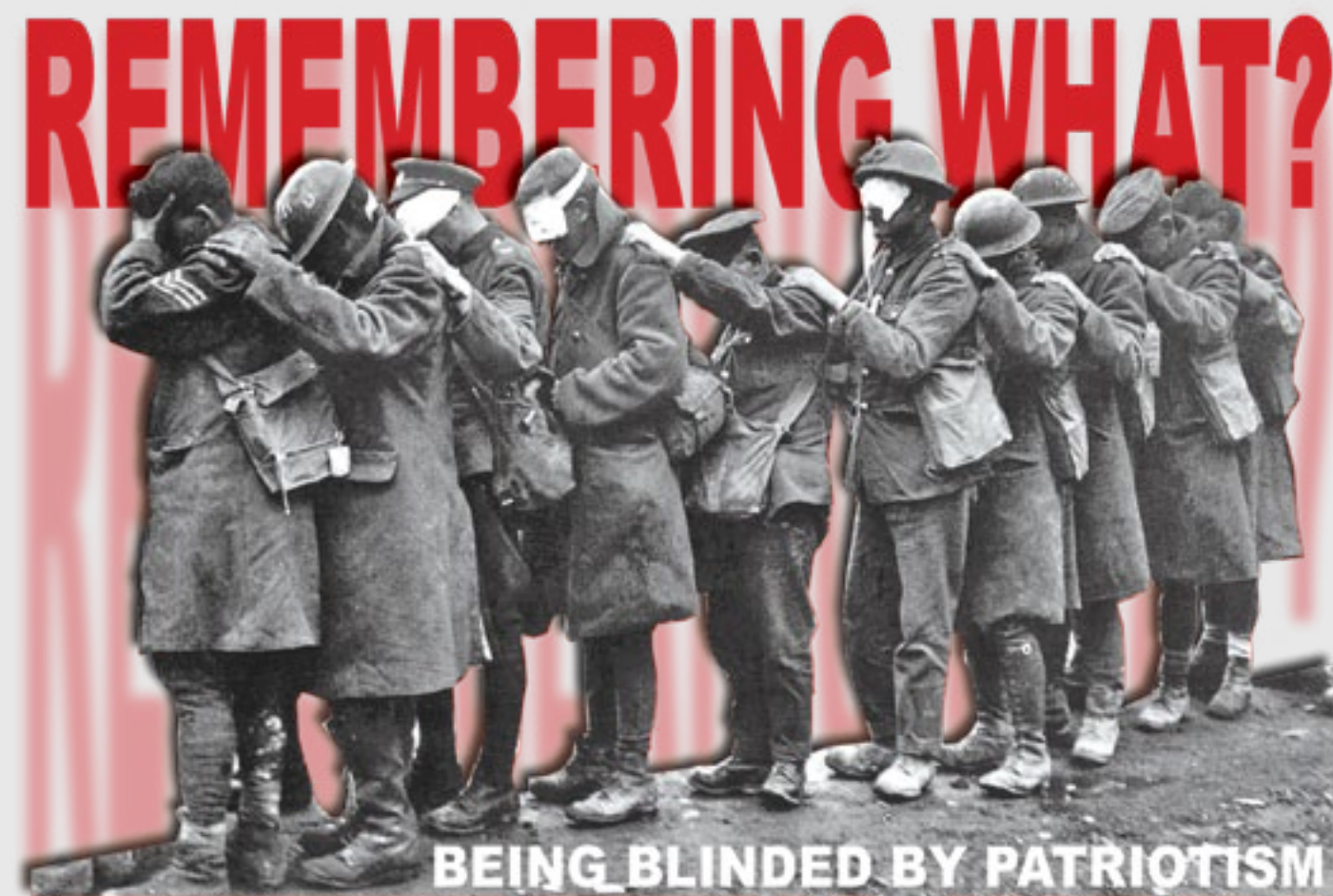
Socialist Party members – all atheists – could clearly not avail themselves of the terms of the Act. In a study of the workings of conscription one author has pointed out that '...it was rare

to find an objection that came within the definition of 'political' (John Rae, *Conscience and Politics: The British Government and the Conscientious Objector to Military Service 1916-1919*). At the end of the war the No-Conscription Fellowship published an analysis of 1,191 'socialist' objectors it had particulars for and Rae is sure that this is as accurate as it is possible to be. However, it is possible that the NCF list failed to include the dozen or so objectors from the Socialist Party as the party distanced itself from that organisation refusing to have anything to do with '...yet another

element of confusion... introduced to divert the attention of the workers from the true service of humanity.' (*Socialist Standard*, May 1916), adding that while the socialist worthy of the name '...has the deepest conscientious objection in its most real sense to laying waste the earth and murdering men ... given the occasion to do so usefully in the furtherance of the real interests of humanity he would count the sacrifice of his own life as justified.'

The Tribunals set up to adjudicate on applications for exemption from military service tended to reject political objections as not being conscientious objections within the meaning of the Act. No record exists, as far as we can tell, of a successful application from a Socialist Party member.

GWYNN THOMAS



Every year about this time we get bombarded with exhortations to *remember*. This year, the centenary of the end of the war that didn't end all wars, it is going to be worse. People who have no compunction in reporting cold callers to the police turn up on your doorstep asking for a donation in return for a piece of red paper on a green bit of plastic; people who confront you on tube stations asking for money with the word 'poppy' are smiled upon, whereas those poor bastards who sit silently with a sign asking for some money to find a place to stay or something to eat are seen as social pariahs. Everywhere we are reminded of the supreme sacrifice for our freedom made by people who will not grow old as we grow old with an exhortation to remember. If you don't remember in the way expected, you are somehow disloyal or contributing to the demise of civilisation.

For a socialist, I have been to quite a few Remembrance Day parades. As children growing up in the sixties there was not much to do of a Tuesday evening and the Cubs and Scouts seemed like a good option – it was definitely preferable to the more militaristic Boys Brigade. One of the downsides was that we had to attend a Remembrance Day service each year. I remember a two-minute silence which they broadcast from the Cenotaph, but I don't recall any attempt to understand the causes of what we were commemorating or to see things from the perspective of the Germans – the pantomime villains in the *Victor* comics that we read.

Fast forward a further thirty years, a period encompassing the involvement in wars in Serbia, the Gulf, Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. I went to another Remembrance Day parade. This was also due to the invidious influence of Baden Powell's organisation. We had, despite misgivings about the duty to God and the Queen stuff, agreed to our son's requests to join his local Cub group. Again, one of the downsides is that he is expected to attend the local Remembrance Sunday parade each year. I hoped it would not be too bad. The 200 or so from the village in which we live who joined the carnage that was

the First World War comprised the majority of the fit and able-bodied men. Of these 42 were killed – for some reason about a third of these are not listed on the war memorial. More recently there had been regular reports of valiant British troops dying in Afghanistan (every one a saint) that might at least provoke the youngsters to think critically about War.

Fat chance. I had a bad feeling on arriving at the Village Green, when I saw that the Boys Brigade Band were present. There was an assorted group of men dressed in greatcoats, wearing assorted medal ribbons, saluting each other, and discussing their 'service' experiences – or however many Fritzes or Arabs they had offed. I guessed that most had been involved in the Second World War or Korea, although there were clearly some from later conflicts. These past servants of the monarch filed in behind the youth organisations, treated like Gods. I think that Harry and I were the only ones without a poppy.

Not much chance of the band playing 'Give Peace a Chance' or 'I don't want to join the Army'. Unsurprisingly the youngsters went off down the round to 'Men of Harlech', 'Blaydon Races', 'The Dambusters' and 'The Great Escape' (or 'the Great Round Up' as the German comic Henning Wehn describes it). Watching them disappear down the road to the Church gave me a vague feeling that this was how regimental bands lead the cannon fodder to meet the cannon.

Anyhow, the service. Surely we would get something based on thou shalt not kill, even if it did not go so far as thinking about whether it is right to covet thy neighbour's oil. Not much chance from a vicar imbued with a sense of patriotism from his role as a chaplain in the Napoleonic War recreation society. Having said that, it could have been worse. There was some attempt to think about the horrors faced, as the Vicar had got hold of a couple of pieces of shrapnel from the Neuve Chappelle battlefield and passed them round. I cannot imagine how horrible it must have been to have a shell explode above you and for great red hot chunks of metal like that to be flying

at you. Unfortunately this was seen very much from the British and Commonwealth perspective and the overall tone of the event was that the British, and whoever was fortunate enough to be their allies at the time, were and still are a non-ending force for good in the world, assisted of course by God. The songs were worse.

It was therefore not surprising that there was no acknowledgement that ‘we’ were equally predisposed to chucking shrapnel as the Germans, despite the fact that it was not possible to tell whether the shrapnel had been made by Krupps or by the factories of one of the hard-faced men who did rather well out of the First World War. Equally there was no attempt to acknowledge that people other than ‘our’ troops had suffered in the various conflicts in which the UK has been involved in the seventy years of peace since VJ Day. The whole thing ended when they read out the names of the glorious dead – or at least those who made the war memorial – and we were required to file past the war memorial and lay our poppies on it. Bit embarrassing that one, but I managed to fade away with Harry whilst the old men in great coats continued to talk about those they had offed.

So that was that. I won’t be back. In recent years we have acquired a library of songs by Leon Rosselson and Robb Johnson which gives a selection of material to play at loud volume at midday British Summer Time on the second Sunday in November each year. Leon Rosselson’s back catalogue includes a song entitled ‘Remembrance Day’ in which the coarse and ill-bred voice of the fallen and the dead interrupts a service at the Cenotaph with the observation that ‘We do not want your two minutes silence you can stuff it up your arse’. But what is wrong with remembering the unnecessary deaths of anything up to 150 million people in the twentieth century, not forgetting those who have died before or since. It is clear to most people that war’s war and it’s nasty and it brutalises those who participate in it – even if they are not killed or injured. Interestingly, there is evidence of psychological problems faced by those sitting behind desks in Arizona or Nevada, or possibly Barford St John, chucking missiles into Afghan villages and wedding celebrations.

In some ways the losses are so vast as to be impersonal – 35,000 killed on the First Day of the Somme and 11,000 at D-Day. However, each one is a tragedy and has a ripple effect on friends and family across many generations. We went to a church in Malvern recently in which memorials commemorates the loss of three subalterns from the same family in the First World War with the fourth and final one shot by the IRA as retaliation for some mindless act of brutality by the Black and Tans. I can only imagine what that family went through.

On a personal level, one of my greatest fears is that my son will be forced into the forces, and one of my more vivid memories of recent years is the relief on the faces of the parents of one of his friends that their son had flunked his A levels and would not be following his father to Sandhurst but would have to use his undoubted talents and charisma doing something useful, teaching children instead.

You could probably point to some instances in which the working class would probably have suffered more if the outcome of particular conflicts had gone the other way – for example would the SPGB exist today if Hitler had been victorious, and it is arguable that overthrow of Milosovich prevented further genocide in Bosnia. Conversely, would the working class have suffered less overall if the outcome of the Spanish Civil War had been different.

These are interesting historical debates but irrelevant to the socialist cause, which sees war as an inevitable by-product of the capitalist system. Having come from a shortish line of

‘conchies’ and Party members, I have never felt like taking the shilling and am pleased that I am probably now too old to face the undoubted pressure that people faced to do a century or so ago. I don’t pretend that I can relate to the men in great coats and do not know how I would fare in the face of real danger – actually I do but I don’t want to say.

There would perhaps be nothing much wrong with either remembering the losses or working to mitigate the horrendous effects that war can have on those who fight it, if remembering the losses and the suffering was accompanied by a genuine commitment that they would not be repeated (even if it fell short of a real understanding of how the system generates conflict).

The work that Help for Heroes does in supporting those suffering from traumas of war is limited to British service personnel and qualified by the strapline exhorting people to contribute on the basis that they would be ‘part of the force for good’. The assumption of the remembrance process is that our boys are the honourable and truthful defenders of truth and justice against barbaric hordes who want to murder us all in our beds. If war ever was fair, it has become increasingly unfair as killing technology has evolved – it is difficult to see how people subject to predator drone attacks could see otherwise. Those who fight against the British do not see things in quite the same way.

So that is about that. We are fundamentally a social species and killing strangers is unnatural and unsettling. War is unnatural as people in war try to kill people who they do not know and who they might well like if they got to know them. The *Sunday Times* (7 November 2004) reported that the last surviving Tommy, Harry Patch, had gone back to Ypres to shake the hand of Charles Kuentz, Germany’s only surviving veteran from the war, commenting that

‘It was emotional. He is 107. We’ve had 87 years to think what war is. To me, it’s a licence to go out and murder. Why should the British government call me up and take me out to a battlefield to shoot a man I never knew, whose language I couldn’t speak? All those lives lost for a war finished over a table. Now what is the sense in that?’

The pressure to remember as a means to condoning future involvement in conflicts will be more this year, the centenary of peace in 1918. It is depressing that the working class will continue to accept this. I spent some time thinking of a pithy end to all this, but could do no better than an extract from the August 1919 *Socialist Standard* discussing the Versailles treaty, namely that the causes of war will remain whilst competition between capitalist groups for routes, markets and control of raw material exists:

‘Clearer than ever before stands out the great fact that there is no hope for real peace in the world until these various sections of workers recognise the common fundamental character of their slavery and set to work to remove it, thus ending the enslavement of the human race by the establishment of socialism.’

CRITCH



At 11 am on 11 November 1918 Germany signed an armistice which ended four years of unrelenting carnage. From 28 July 1914 to 11 November, over 9 million soldiers and 6 million civilians perished. The First World War is sometimes seen as an historical accident triggered by the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand. Yet from the nineteenth century onwards growing rivalries between the major capitalist powers created tensions that were bound to erupt into war.

Prussian victory in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 led to the unification of Germany in 1871. The new German state then entered into an alliance with Austria-Hungary and Russia, known as the League of the Three Emperors, to contain French power. Russian victory in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and increasing Russian influence in the Balkans brought this alliance to an end. Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy then formed the Triple Alliance. To counteract this France entered into an alliance with Russia. Britain later joined France and Russia to form the Triple Entente.

Germany, since unification, had become a major economic and industrial power. Its rulers sought to compete with other major powers in world markets and seek colonies that would be sources of raw materials. To achieve this, they sought to expand their military capacity and, therefore, they proceeded to build up their navy. This inevitably led to rivalry with Britain in the control of global sea routes. Germany, Russia, France and Italy increased the size of their standing armies.

Instability arose in the Balkans as competing powers vied with each other to grab the spoils from the declining Ottoman Empire. Austria-Hungary earned the enmity of Russia and Serbia when it formally annexed the former Ottoman province of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Germany also had a strategic interest in the region. The route of the proposed Berlin-Constantinople railway would travel through Vienna and Belgrade, and therefore Germany would require some control or influence over Serbia. This would bring conflict with Russia.

Austria-Hungary’s rulers used the occasion of the Archduke’s assassination to bring Serbia, which they suspected of promoting pan Slavic nationalism in Bosnia-Herzegovina, to heel. They delivered an ultimatum that they calculated would be rejected. Serbia accepted most of the conditions, but had reservations on others. Thereupon, they declared war on Serbia with the backing of their German ally. The Russian leaders retaliated by mobilising their forces, arguing that it was their duty to protect their fellow Slavs. But their real fear was that an Austrian victory would



result in further Austrian and German encroachment of the Balkans, which would threaten to undermine their trade through the Bosphorus Straits. The German rulers in turn demanded that Russia demobilise its forces, whereupon Russia refused and they declared war on her. A couple of days later Germany declared war on Russia’s ally, France. In order to avoid the highly fortified border with France, the German leaders decided to move their forces through Belgium. When the Belgian government refused free passage, the German military launched an invasion. Ostensibly the United Kingdom was committed by the Treaty of London 1839 to defend Belgium, and this was the reason given for declaring war on Germany. However, the British rulers main concern was the safeguarding of their trade routes to their empire, and followed a policy of ‘splendid isolation’, whereby Britain would intervene only in European affairs when there was a shift in the balance of power between the competing nations to their disadvantage. The German invasion of Belgium was deemed to be such a moment. The British government also drew on workers from the Dominions and Empire – India, Canada, Australia, New Zealand -- to fight for them.

Bribery was used to entice other countries into the War. Rumania was promised Hungarian territory if they joined the ‘allied powers’ -- Britain and France. Bulgaria preferred the offer from Germany, that it could have Macedonia, and so joined them. Italy was promised the Austrian regions of South Tyrol and Trieste and Northern Dalmatia by the allied powers. Italy turned her back on her former allies, Germany and Austria-Hungary, and joined the latter. Japan also joined the allied powers in the hope of acquiring Germany’s Chinese possessions.

In 1917, in a bid to end the war quickly, German forces intensified their blockade of Britain’s ports, which had been a source of friction with the United States for some time, and resumed attacks on shipping. Many American ships were sunk with a great loss of life. This, along with a telegram from the German Foreign Minister requesting support from the Mexicans in exchange for assistance in retaking US territory lost in the Mexican-American War, prompted the US government to declare war on Germany on 6 April 1917. Also, US capitalists made money out of providing financial loans to Britain and France and therefore saw it as in their economic interests to support the allied powers.

Workers did the fighting

When the capitalists of different nations fall out and go to war, they don’t normally do the fighting themselves, but get their respective working classes to do it for them. This requires an appeal to patriotism and jingoism, whereby politicians toured the country whipping up enthusiasm for the war. One successful orator was Horatio Bottomley, the so-called People’s Tribune but in fact a discredited bankrupt before the war. For all his efforts in bringing in recruits, he managed to rake in £78,000 which he spent on racehorses, women and champagne. For those young male workers who were of military age and not seduced by the clarion call to arms, young women were employed to stick white feathers on them.

The capitalists and their politicians did not garner

support on their own. They had the backing of the so-called ‘workers representatives’, the Labour and Social Democratic parties, which abandoned their proclaimed commitment to the international working class and rallied behind the war efforts of their respective ruling classes. The German Social Democratic representatives in the Reichstag gave a spurious ‘Marxist’ justification for voting for war credits. A victorious Germany, they argued, would overthrow the backward Tsarist regime and capitalism would develop rapidly in Russia. Expansion in industrial production and the growth of the Russian working class would speedily create the conditions for the establishment of socialism. Trade unions showed their support by co-operating with the employers to ensure maximum production and the curtailing of any strike action. The suffragettes suspended their campaign and joined the war effort. However, there was opposition to the war from Lenin, Rosa Luxembourg, Sylvia Pankhurst and of course, the Socialist Party.

The capitalist class couldn’t rely on jingoist appeals alone, they needed high ideals as well. The British capitalist class claimed to be fighting for ‘the liberty of small nations’. Although this noble ideal seemingly applied to Belgium, curiously it did not apply to Britain’s colonies, certainly not in the case of Ireland, where the Easter rising in 1916 was ruthlessly suppressed. Another great ideal was ‘to make the world safe for democracy’. Oddly, censorship and restriction of war reporting was required for this one. Many would consider the Russian Tsar to be a strange bedfellow.

It would seem that it is not enough for the capitalist class that their workers were facing the bullets and bombs on the battle fronts, for they appeared to be dissatisfied with the workers’ performance on the home front. In the UK, many blamed the munitions workers for the shortages of shells needed for the war effort, that they were too busy boozing in the pubs. Restriction in pub hours were introduced which survived until the 1990s.

Discontent

From 1916, with increasing hardship and seemingly no end in sight to the war, many workers became disillusioned and there were grumblings about this being a businessman’s war. Strikes, protests and riots erupted. The situation in Russia was particularly dire, where peasants were taken off the land to fight on the front line, resulting in acute food shortages in the cities. This was exacerbated by poor communication infrastructure and corruption. Food riots ensued and mass desertions from the army took place. Workers councils emerged in the cities and organised strikes. In March 2017,



Germany’s future, Adolf Hitler during the first world war (front left).

the Tsar was forced to abdicate and a provisional government headed by Kerensky took his place. However, they attempted to keep Russia in the war, which only increased the discontent and their power was challenged by the Petrograd Workers Council. The German leaders saw an opportunity to take Russia out of the war. They allowed Lenin to travel through Germany in a sealed train to Russia. Once there, Lenin was able to gain support for the Bolsheviks in the Workers Councils. In November 1917, the Kerensky government was overthrown by an uprising led by the Bolsheviks. Not long afterwards, they negotiated a peace treaty with Germany at Brest Litovsk.

Now that Russia was out of the war, the German military could reinforce their forces on the Western front. Although this gave Germany an added advantage, they were still unable to deliver the knockout blow to their opponents. However, the working class discontent that brought down the Tsarist regime was also being visited on Germany. On 29 October 1918, a mutiny by sailors sparked a general workers and soldiers uprising which finally forced the German government to seek an armistice which was signed on 11 November 1918. The Kaiser abdicated on 28th November 1918.

Aside from mass human slaughter, what was the legacy of the war? It could be seen as the ultimate triumph of capitalism, as the vestiges of the feudalistic empires were swept away. The Austrian-Hungary Empire collapsed and metamorphosed into separate capitalist nation states. The Ottoman Empire disintegrated and the French and British ruling classes carved up its territories among themselves. Germany became a modern capitalist state under the rule of the Social Democratic Party. Russia evolved into an authoritarian state capitalist country. The Third International was launched during the Russian civil war in 1919 to support the Bolshevik regime and superseded the Second International which was dissolved in 1916. It became a mouthpiece of the Bolshevik regime and promoted the idea that communism equates with state capitalism and that it can only be brought about by violent revolution led by a vanguard party. This served to confuse workers as to what socialism really is and has played a part in holding back the genuine socialist movement.

With working class men being sent to the front, more women had to be brought into the munitions factories and offices to keep production going. They remained a part of the workforce after the war ended.

The phrase ‘The war to end all wars’ must be one of the sardonic statements of all times. Far from ending wars, the First World War sowed the seeds for further conflicts. The punitive measures of the Versailles Peace Treaty helped foster a sense of grievance, a feeling that Germany had been stabbed in the back. German nationalists, including the Nazis, exploited this for their own ends. Furthermore, the heavy reparations led to economic instability, such as the hyperinflation of 1923, which provided the fertile soil for aggressive nationalists like the Nazis to flourish. The increasing hostility between the Western Powers and the Bolshevik regime presaged the Cold War, which came to dominate the twentieth century. The League of Nations was set up to prevent further wars, but was powerless to do so, as it could not deal with the underlying cause -- competition between capitalist powers for world markets and sources for raw materials. Wars are inevitable within capitalism.

OLIVER BOND

We look at the world of advertising, how it has changed over time, and what it shows about how capitalism operates.

In 1957 the American journalist Vance Packard published *The Hidden Persuaders*, an examination of the US advertising industry. One aspect he emphasised was the role of psychology in determining what the advertising message would be, with motivation research aiming to discover what drove people to make particular choices, whether it was packaging, image, celebrity endorsement, or whatever. For consumers are often ‘loyal’ to a product, even when they cannot tell it apart from its competitors. In a 1981 epilogue to a later edition, he looked at social developments that had influenced the advertisers worked, with in family size, more single people and a growth in sexual permissiveness among the factors affecting consumption and hence advertising. But it was still a matter of working out people’s motivations for purchases and tapping into those. Most beer ads, for instance, sold companionship rather than beer.

Since Packard was writing, there have of course been massive changes in how advertising operates, with ads now being almost everywhere, rather than just found in newspapers, TV and street posters. In particular, the proliferation of online ads has had a major impact, not just on the advertising industry, but on how all of us as consumers are targeted. Technology and supercomputers have taken over much of the role of psychology in efforts to study and predict how people will behave. One of the crucial considerations is that of the dwell time, the time a user spends looking at an ad, especially one online. Clicking on a link and then almost immediately going on to another page means the dwell time, and presumably the impact of the content, of the first link are minimal.

There are even claims for the efficacy of advertising in public toilets and those in shopping centres, restaurants, pubs and so on. Dwell times are impressive: on average a man spends 55 seconds looking at an ad above a urinal, and ads can be targeted to the desired gender (washroomadvertising.co.uk).

The UK is the largest advertising market in Europe, with expenditure of over £21bn in 2016. The US is of course globally the largest market, with \$197bn spent in 2017. Advertising supposedly ‘adds £120bn to UK GDP by raising the level of economic activity and boosting productivity’ (thecreativeindustries.co.uk). Many workers in industries such as music and animation are employed in advertising, which means they are forced to contribute to selling things rather than doing anything truly creative.

The Advertising Association brings together agencies and brands to, among other things, show the value of



advertising to politicians and others. It runs a campaign Front Foot, designed to ‘advocate advertising’s beneficial and responsible contribution to the economy, to society and to people’ (adassoc.org.uk). It is not clear if this alleged contribution includes the visits of arms companies to schools, where they promote their brands and may get children to play with a missile simulator (*Observer* 1 September).

On the ‘other’ side, the Advertising Standards Authority and the Committee of Advertising Practice are there to keep UK advertising ‘legal, decent, honest and truthful’. For instance, a recent Tui ad for a summer holiday that could only be taken in September or October was banned, despite the company claiming that their summer holiday period ran until the end of October.

In September there was an almighty fuss when a Nike ad featured Colin Kaepernick, the American footballer who had caused controversy and lost playing contracts after he knelt rather than stood during the playing of the US national anthem, in a protest about racial injustice. Trump said that Nike were sending ‘a terrible message’, but it seems to have benefited their sales rather than harmed them.

It is often said that the best ad is the one that doesn’t look like an ad. Thus Instagram influencers, as they are known, can push products such as teeth whiteners, without declaring that they are paid to endorse them. More generally, social media are awash with product placement and more subtle ways of influencing people’s behaviour, and the line between advertising and publicity is often extremely blurred. The use of ad-blockers on the internet can reduce or even eliminate the annoying ads that appear on many web pages. Newspapers such as the *Guardian* have got round this by offering pages of ‘paid content’ that still bring in revenue.

In many cases TV ads are repeated over and over in fairly short proximity: this appears particularly to be the case with cosmetic products such as perfume, shampoo and toothpaste, where what is being sold is essentially an image rather than a product. In fact what is marketed, in this and other cases, is a brand, the kind of development described in Naomi Klein’s *No Logo*. Packard noted that in 1950s America some cosmetics companies were spending a quarter of their income on advertising and promotion, and he quoted one tycoon as saying, ‘We don’t sell lipstick, we buy customers’ (he described this person as ‘probably mythical’, but it does not seem at all an unlikely thing to say).

In socialism there would presumably be what might be termed public-service announcements, such as reminding people to have a flu jab; giving warnings of strong winds or heavy rain; and informing people of new books, films and other products. But the onslaught of ways of getting us to buy, with its total waste of resources and human ingenuity, will be a thing of the past.

PAUL BENNETT

‘Resistance is futile’

Or so claim the Borg in Star Trek. We wouldn’t go that far. But it is true that as an end in itself it can’t get very far. Separated from a struggle for a new and different society, it’s a dead-end. It’s running fast to stay still, rushing around trying to deal with effects while the cause remains intact.

Those advocating mere resistance fall into two groups. First, the genuine reformists who have no vision of an alternative society to capitalism and who just want to bring in a few minor changes such as the pathetic Tobin tax (a tax of 0.01 percent on speculative currency transactions) while leaving the rest of capitalism unchanged. These are the NGOs, the religious groups and organisations like Tax Justice and Jubilee Debt Campaign.

The other group is composed of people for whom mere resistance is only a tactic. They are recognisable on demonstrations by their red flags and portraits of Lenin with Trotsky, or Mao or Che. As Leninists they believe that ‘ordinary’ people are not capable of acquiring a vision of an alternative to capitalism, but only of resisting downward pressures on their standard of living, and so need to be led by a conscious minority—they.

Their tactic is to encourage mere resistance in the hope of riding to power on its back. To this end they have set up front organisations with names like ‘Globalise Resistance’ or ‘International Resistance’ which rival the genuine reformists in the limited nature of their demands. They do in fact have an alternative to private capitalism but, as an idealised version of the state capitalism that used to exist in Russia, it’s not an attractive one. No wonder they feel the need to disguise it.

What, then, is the alternative to capitalism? Socialism, but

in its original sense of a world-wide society without frontiers based on the common ownership of the Earth’s resources and the application on a global scale of the principle of ‘from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs.’ Such a society has never existed, certainly not in Russia or China nor under Labour or Social Democratic or left-wing governments. It’s yet to be established and is urgently needed to tackle the problems currently facing the world.

We think the way to get there is for the vast majority of those who are excluded from control of their own society, so that they can be used as wage-slaves, to organise consciously and collectively to remove the tools of political power from the hands of their exploiters. Without those weapons being used against us, there’ll be nothing for us to resist, and we can go about running society in our own interests, not those of a tiny few.



Unpaid work

‘British people do more than £1tn of housework each year – unpaid’, read the headline in the *Guardian* (3 October) reporting on a study by the Office for National Statistics, and went on: ‘Unpaid household work, such as looking after children, doing laundry and cooking, is worth £1.24tn per year.’

Many, including socialists, have pointed out that, in only measuring paid work, GDP omits whole swathes of work as the exercise of mental and physical energy. Not all work is employment.

The ONS arrived at its figure by calculating what people would have to pay if they got someone to do the work, not just of looking after the children, cooking and doing the laundry, but also of cleaning, repairing and maintaining the home (and garden), caring for an adult at home, and driving to and from work, the supermarket and school. Also included was voluntary activity outside the home.

To make the figures more understandable to the general public, the ONS divided the total figure of £1.24 trillion by the total UK population of

some 65.7 million, to arrive at the figure of £18,932 literally per every person including children. This can be broken down by activity. Perhaps surprisingly the largest is transport at £5459 (29 percent). Next is child care at £5358 (28 percent). housing services (cleaning, etc) is £3037 (16 percent); food preparation £2400 (13 percent), laundering £1355 (7 percent), adult care £898 and voluntary activity £365.

The *Times* reported the survey under the headline ‘Washing Up? That’ll be £12,000, darling’, with this as what a ‘stay-at-home spouse’ could claim for household chores. But it is not just women who do this unpaid work as is obvious in the case of people living on their own; all the work will be done by them, whether a man or a woman.

Apart from adult care and voluntary activity outside the home, the work covered by the ONS survey is work in connection with recreating the mental and physical energies people sell to their employer and with bringing up a future generation of wage workers. This means that, strictly speaking, it is not really unpaid. The work itself is unpaid, but not what the person doing the work has to consume to be in a position to do it. This has to be paid for, and is out of wages or state payments such as child benefit and carer’s allowance. This is most obvious in

the case of the stay-at-home partner; the food, clothes, etc they consume has to be paid for out of the wage of the working partner. The same applies to everyone carrying out the unpaid work, including those in paid work. Provision for them to create the mental and physical energy to carry out the unpaid work is included in wages.

This brings out the fallacy of the ‘Wages for Housework’ campaign. If the *Times*’s £12,000 were paid to the stay-at-home partner then the working partner’s wage would come to be reduced by the same amount. In fact if all this work were paid then wages would tend towards 16.2 percent of their current level as the percentage of consumer spending that the ONS says ‘was spent on direct costs for providing unpaid work services, mainly spent on fuel, renting and food.’ This means that in the ONS’s figure there’s double-counting with the greater part of people’s income from work and state payments. This does not make the statistics invalid or useless. They are interesting in revealing what goes into recreating labour-power – which when used by capitalist employers provides them with the unpaid labour that is the source of their profits.

PROPER GANDER

The Great Russian Fake Off

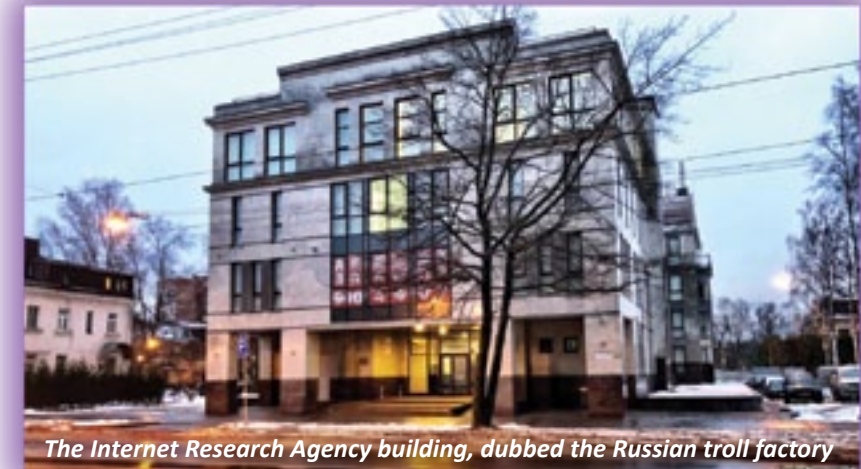
TREAD CAREFULLY if you venture onto YouTube to find out about left-wing ideas. While there are plenty of interesting and lively short films produced by leftists of all persuasions, you can also stumble across mean-spirited uploads from their opponents. A video with a title like ‘triggered snowflake cringe compilation’ or ‘social justice warrior fail’ isn’t likely to provide a nuanced, balanced critique of left-wing views. There are dozens of videos like this, posted by smug right-wing outlets, intended to show the left, and especially feminists, as naively misguided. They tend to be selectively-edited clips from vlogs, interviews, and interventions featuring leftists with weak arguments or whose emotions overshadow the point they’re making. Just one example is the uploaded footage of a mostly incoherent heckler at a University of Massachusetts Amherst lecture. When the heckler was nicknamed ‘Trigglypuff’, a meme was born and the video quickly attracted hundreds of thousands of views, shares and (invariably negative) comments.

Something different and more unsettling was going on with a more recent viral video, though. This one showed a woman ‘activist’ pouring diluted bleach over the crotches of men who are ‘manspreading’ while sitting on a Russian tube train. The video provoked thousands of online responses, with many saying that her actions were

more of an assault than a protest. But then it was exposed as a fake. One of the men shown getting his trousers soaked told the St Petersburg-based online magazine *Bumaga* that he and the others were actors hired by a film company, suggested to be one with links to the Kremlin. The video was first posted on *In The Now*, an English-language social media channel owned by *Russia Today*, itself state-funded. It might have originated in the Internet Research Agency, based in St Petersburg. Despite its bland-sounding name, this is a ‘troll farm’, which produces propaganda for the Russian state to be spread across social media. Another

product of the farm was reportedly the ‘Saiga 410K Review’ video, which caused controversy for apparently showing an American soldier shooting bullets into a copy of the Quran. A BBC investigation in 2015 concluded that the footage was faked, as the uniform wasn’t genuine, and the ‘soldier’ was most likely a St Petersburg barman.

Why would the Russian government produce and distribute staged videos? ‘EU Vs Disinformation’, an anti-Kremlin website run by the EU, claimed the bleach stunt was designed to stir up people against feminism. Its aim would be not only to show feminists in a bad light, but also to increase divisions between people and groups through their responses to it. Similarly, the ‘Saiga 410K Review’ video was made to incite Muslims against America. The filmed acts were seen as extreme, and led to the extreme reactions the producers intended.



The Internet Research Agency building, dubbed the Russian troll factory

This kind of tactic isn’t only linked to the Kremlin. In 2016, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism website reported that the American military had commissioned a British Public Relations firm to produce bogus Al-Qaeda videos. CDs of these were planted by soldiers operating in the Middle East, not only to spread disinformation about Al-Qaeda but also to track where the CDs later turned up.

Making fake propaganda is a dirty enough trick, but a technique allegedly used by the Kremlin to influence the American Presidential Election is even more devious. Their approach here

was apparently to create propaganda supporting both Democrats and Republicans, as well as other groups ranging from white supremacists to Black Lives Matter activists. For example, in May 2016, two competing rallies were held in Houston, Texas to protest against and defend the recently opened Library of Islamic Knowledge. Both were organised through Facebook groups later revealed to be accounts from the Internet Research Agency.

This method follows the approach of ‘Political Technologists’, such as Vladislav Surkov, a close ally of President Putin. In Russia, Surkov sponsored fascist groups, anti-fascist groups, and even groups opposed to Putin. Then he let it be known that he was doing this, so that no-one could tell how genuine these organisations were. By simultaneously backing opposing ideologies, the intention isn’t to boost support for any particular one of them,

even whichever is more consistent with state policy. Instead, the aim is to stir up confusion and also mistrust, not only of particular groups, but of what’s real. Political Technologists want to manipulate political debate by undermining it. So, exposing the bleach footage as phoney can’t even be seen as a loss for the Kremlin, as this just lays on another layer of cynicism. Cheekily,

the video itself includes the caption ‘some say it’s all staged’. If anything, the trend for fake videos can be a useful lesson, a reminder that it pays to be sceptical.

MIKE FOSTER



Capital Expenditure



Anna Minton: **Big Capital: Who Is London For?** Penguin. £8.99

Though written before Grenfell, this is a devastating analysis of the housing situation in London, with implications for other places too. Housing, Minton says, is a safety deposit box and a cash cow, with the rate of return on land and property far exceeding economic growth, let alone rises in wages.

At one end of the market are the super-luxury flats owned by Russian billionaires and Chinese investors, the transnational elites who are described as Ultra High Net Worth Individuals. At the other end are the 'beds in sheds', unauthorised dwellings in back gardens, and rented bed spaces, where someone may sleep in a bunk, with four people sharing the front room of a terraced house. There are also the 'hidden homeless', some of whom actually sleep on buses.

Most people, of course, are in between these extremes, either renting or owning and often suffering from the inflated cost of housing. One example given is of a woman who earns nearly £40,000 a year; her partner also works full-time and they have two children, a boy and a girl, but live in a two-bedroom flat. It is better than their previous place because the heating works. She describes her life as 'middle class poverty'. Many people could afford a mortgage but, because of the high level of rents, cannot save enough for a deposit to buy their own place.

The pressure on housing in London means that many homeless families are rehoused outside the capital. One recent

report (*Observer* 2 September) noted that people who buy houses in Bath to avoid the costs of London are pushing up rents and house prices for locals. Thus developments in London have impacts on other towns and cities too. Forcing those on lower wages into the outer areas of London may give rise to something along the lines of the *banlieues* in Paris.

Minton traces various reasons behind this appalling situation. The virtual abandonment of new-build council or social housing means a drastic reduction in the availability of lower-priced homes, while the 'affordable housing' required in new developments is in reality affordable for very few. Thatcher's 'Right to Buy' policy increased the number of homeowners, but in fact they were leaseholders rather than freeholders and so vulnerable to compulsory purchase schemes. People bought out in this way are rarely given the real market value of their home and so have to move further out, away from friends and family.

There are many other factors involved, including the system of housing benefit, but the basic cause is that under capitalism housing is part of the market system and exists to provide profits for the few rather than decent homes for the many. What may help to bring the whole edifice to an end is the fact that companies are becoming increasingly worried that most of their workers will simply not be able to afford to live in London, and the Fifty Thousand Homes campaign is designed to address this. When business groups state that 'The pricing out of young talent and the London workers who keep our city moving hurts all levels of society, and threatens London's status as a beacon for creativity and enterprise' (londonfirst.co.uk), it is clear that the housing problem affects capitalists as well as workers, though in different ways.

PB



Anti- all nationalisms



Why Socialist Oppose Zionism and Anti-Semitism. Socialist Party. 40 pages. £2 (£3.50 p + p UK Inland).

It is common for people and organisations on the left of capitalist politics to express opposition to Jewish nationalism (i.e. Zionism) and support for Arab nationalism (i.e. Palestinian 'self-determination'). The justification given for this is that the Zionists stole the Palestinians' homeland, called it Israel and now oppress and intimidate them in their efforts to return to it or to achieve some kind of political status in the region. Others, conversely, support Zionism and the Jewish state and oppose the aspirations of the Palestinians on the grounds that Israel is a bulwark against forces that are opposed to Western values.

The position taken by the Socialist Party in its new pamphlet, 'Why Socialists Oppose Zionism and Anti-Semitism', is different from both of these. It is a position of opposition to all nationalism, whatever form it takes, which is summed up clearly in the pamphlet's introduction:

'Nations are not natural divisions of humanity: they are political constructs, "imagined nations"The notion that there are collectivities called nations with rights is a product of the capitalist era of human history. States – coercive institutions ruling over a given territory – existed before capitalism, but, once control over them had passed to the capitalist class and its representatives, the new rulers sought to legitimise their rule as that of representatives of "the nation". Nearly everywhere those who ruled were not homogeneous in terms of languages

or religion. They had to be moulded into a "nation" by having it drummed into them that they had a common history, interest and identity. As most states are of relatively recent origin, such "nation-building" is still going on today in many parts of the world.'

But even those sympathetic to this position may think that it applies less readily to Israel given the 'extra' ingredient in the mix - that of the centuries-long persecutions of Jews by those professing other religions, most notably Christianity, and hence the need for Jewish people to have a home of their own, a place to live in peace and without fear of anti-semitic persecution. This pamphlet chronicles the history, recent and otherwise, of this aspiration for a Jewish 'homeland' by reproducing a series of articles published on the subject in the *Socialist Standard* over the last hundred years. In recent times it is a history of the large capitalist powers pursuing their economic and strategic interests in the region and jumping from the Jewish to the Arab side and back again according to prevailing circumstances. The so-called Balfour Declaration of 1917 by the British government guaranteed the Jews a national home in Palestine but, when, after World War 2, this turned into the demand for an independent state, the British, initially at least, resisted this with force. But partition of Palestinian territory was finally accepted by the Western capitalist powers (and initially by Russia too), resulting in an ongoing conflict between Arabs and Jews that has lasted to this day. The words of the 1937 article reprinted in this pamphlet ('Divide and Rule in Palestine) have proved prescient: 'This will give Arab and Jew (like the North and South of Ireland) something to quarrel over for years to come, to the hindrance of propaganda for working-class solidarity against the international capitalist class.'

As for a new era for Jews where they could live in peace and free from anti-semitism, this has clearly not happened as witnessed by the various wars which have taken place between Israel and neighbouring Arab states since the Jewish state was created and the perpetual tension caused by attacks on its territory and also by Israel becoming an object of hatred in the Arab world. Many Jews fled from anti-semitism in Europe but in so doing only succeeded in generating another anti-semitism in the Middle East.

The setting up of the new Jewish state in Palestine commanded a great deal of

misplaced devotion, especially among the world's Jewish population, with opposition to Israel or support for the displaced Arabs being seen as a form of anti-semitism itself. However the principled and consistent opposition of the Socialist Party to the nationalism inherent in the setting up and running of any new capitalist state, whether Jewish or otherwise, marks us off from everyone else on the political spectrum and makes it clear that our opposition to Zionism has absolutely nothing to do with anti-semitism. Evidence that we are entirely 'even-handed' in judging both Israeli nationalism (Zionism) and Arab nationalism is provided by the October 1993 article reproduced in this pamphlet ('Peace in Palestine'):

'Our opposition to Zionism does not mean that we support the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. Unlike some, we don't single out Jewish nationalism for special condemnation. We condemn all nationalisms equally. The "Palestinian nation" is just as much a myth as the "Jewish nation", or any other nation. Nationalism is the ideology which seeks to justify the capitalist division of the world into separate "nation-states", each competing to gain a place in the sun for its ruling class and each with killing machines at its disposal. We utterly reject this view of the way humanity should organise itself.'

Since nationalist movements the world over always turn out to be movements in favour of local capitalists wanting their own state in order to be able to pursue and defend their economic interests, it follows that any talk of 'self-determination' for a group of people inevitably results not in some kind of 'liberation' but in a change of masters. Given this context can it truly be said that Jewish wage and salary workers in Israel are in a fundamentally different position from Jewish wage and salary workers in other countries? The closing words of the introduction to the pamphlet make the socialist position absolutely clear: 'Socialist opposition to Zionism is not anti-semitic; it is opposition not just to Zionism but is based on opposition to all nationalism and all nationalist movements.' It flows from this that we resolutely oppose the conventional left-right politics of capitalism in which people support and encourage others to support one form of nationalism against another form of nationalism.

HOWARD MOSS

Exhibition review

Peace and Plenty? Oldham and the First World War

About fifteen thousand men from Oldham (Owdhamites) fought in the First World War, and over 2,600 of them were killed, with the highest number of deaths on a single day being on the first day of the Gallipoli campaign. This is the background to an exhibition at Gallery Oldham, on until the middle of January, which contains many contemporary posters, cartoons, photos and other mementoes.

Many of those who joined up went into two local regiments, the Oldham Territorials and the Oldham Pals. At first there was little difficulty in obtaining volunteers, and the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915 was used as an opportunity for recruitment. Supporters of the war, such as the local suffragette Annie Kenney, spoke enthusiastically in its favour, while attempts to hold anti-war meetings often resulted in violence, such as the sacking of an Independent Labour Party office in the town in August 1917.

Those who stayed in Oldham encountered problems with food shortages, especially of sugar and potatoes, with long queues at shops and markets and claims of profiteering. Women took over much of the work previously done by men, in engineering works, for instance. Loans from workers were used to finance the war effort, and Oldham was among the towns presented with a tank as thanks for this. The tanks were displayed locally, and many of those that survived until the Second World War were used as scrap.

And was it indeed peace and plenty when the war was over? For one thing, over six hundred Owdhamites died in the 1918 flu epidemic. In June 1919, cotton workers went on strike for three weeks and won a reduction of the working week to 48 hours (which meant they could eat their breakfast at home, rather than at the mill). Before the war, Oldham had been the world's leading cotton town. After the war there was a short-lived speculative boom in the cotton industry, but this did not last, and unemployment grew in the 1920s and even more so in the 1930s. So Oldham, like other places, was in no way part of a 'fit country for heroes', as Lloyd George claimed.

PB



50 Years Ago

The Suffragettes

In January 1918 Punch signalled the end of the struggle for female suffrage, which had provided it with so much material, with one last cartoon. There was a woman, looking like Joan of Arc, holding a banner with the words “Women’s Franchise”. The caption read simply “At Last”.

In February that year an amendment to the Representation of the People Act gave the parliamentary vote to those women over thirty who held a £5 occupation qualification, or were householders, the wives of householders, or graduates. That was the beginning; in 1928 the Baldwin government, despite one or two diehards still resisting from the last ditches, conceded the vote to everyone over the age of twenty-one, man and woman.

The campaign for the vote was part of a great surge of female discontent which had gathered its force at the end of the nineteenth century. At that time, the full effects of industrialisation were being felt; the old type of home life had been undermined and women had been forced onto the

labour market in competition with men. Wherever they could—in the craft unions and, for the better off in the so-called professions—the men organised to resist this competition.

For most women, the one hope of escape from the labour market was by marriage which, since it involved the exchange of conjugal rights for some sort of livelihood, was sometimes stigmatised as legal prostitution. Marriage, in any case, had its problems; the old melodramas about wife beating were based on more than the authors’ imagination. (....)

If women are to do something about their place in society, they must first face the fact that most of them are workers, with labour power to sell, just like the majority of men. They must realise that their vote has solved nothing, changed nothing, because—again like the majority of men—it is a vote not backed by an understanding of society. But with that understanding the vote can do more than any Suffragette ever dreamed of — it can bring “. . . the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.”

Human relationships in socialism

By nature ‘human nature’ is gregarious and co-operative. It is the class division of society that has produced the ongoing alienation, competition and anti-natural behaviour we see. It has criminalised society. Socialism is the negation of capitalism which will be the last class society in history.

With socialism, gangsters’ cliques will lose their socio-economic breeding grounds. Their anti-social and anti-natural survivalist tricks – ‘the most violent, mean and malignant passions of the human breast, the *Furies of private interest*’ (Karl Marx) will fall into oblivion. Competition for possessions will give way to cooperation for life. Humans will regain their lost original nature once again by demolishing their ‘fear of freedom’ in a knowledgeable coherent relationship among themselves and with their surrounding nature, moving on to a higher phase of social progress, reaffirming equality, freedom, peace and happiness in unison, in harmony. ‘The meaning of peace is the absence of opposition to socialism’ (Karl Marx). According to him, with the dissolution of the power of money, private exchange and private property will cease to exist; ‘then you can exchange *love only for love, trust for trust, etc ...*’ (Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*).

Marx and Engels held genuine socialism to be ‘*Communismus, Socialismus, Humanismus*’ (*German Ideology*, Chapter 4).

Engels clearly set out the progression: ‘State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous and then dies of itself. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of the processes of production. The state is not ‘abolished’, it withers away’ (Frederick Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*).

World socialist society will do away with classes and could be organised on a three-tier system of Local, Regional and Global Councils

to deal with the administration of all their respective specific responsibilities relating to life, things, relations and problems. Money will go to the museums beside bronze axes. Private property and all its paraphernalia relating to money, wages, profits, private, joint-stock, state, multi-national, transnational and corporate et al. ownerships, and all selfish private interests as against social well-being, will be things of the past. Under such a global arrangement of things and affairs of life, the crimes of today will also generally be a thing of the past. In the event of any rarely occurring aberrations on the part of an individual member of society, the response could be educative and social correctional and compassionate counselling. Humans will have elevated themselves to a higher stage in history as a new-born *humane* species, leaving behind their prehistory of competition and conflict.

BINAY SARKAR



For full details of all our meetings and events see our **Meetup** site: <http://www.meetup.com/The-Socialist-Party-of-Great-Britain/>

Obituaries:

Joe Carter

We are saddened to report the death in September of Joe Carter at the age of 85. He joined the old Camberwell branch of the Party in 1963, later transferring to Haringey branch, In the 1960s and 70s he was active as an outdoor speaker (in particular at Tower Hill and Lincoln’s Inn), indoor lecturer, writer (as ‘JEF’) and as a party candidate in local elections in north London. Born in Switzerland and having lived and worked in Belgium, he was fluent in both Italian and French. He worked, thanks to his knowledge of languages, as a night telephonist in the overseas section of the Post Office. Our condolences go to Janet, a Party member, and his family.

Ian Williamson

We have also learned of the death in September of Ian Williamson in Inverness

where he hailed from. He joined the Party in 1966 after hearing outdoor speakers in Glasgow. Like many others he moved to London, where he worked as a barman - as he did when later he moved to Japan. His experiences there led him to write in *The Kilt and the Kimono: Japan Through the Eyes of A Scot*, published in 1987. Basically a book on Japanese life and culture, it also put the socialist case, looking forward to a time when the world ‘will be rid of a system in which a minority class own the means of wealth production and distribution, and give way to a system in which all that is on and in the earth will be the common property of all mankind irrespective of race, colour or creed.’

Ron Stone

A correction to an unfortunate error to last month’s obituary can be found on page 5.

Declaration of Principles

This declaration is the basis of our organisation and, because it is also an important historical document dating from the formation of the party in 1904, its original language has been retained.

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation

of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

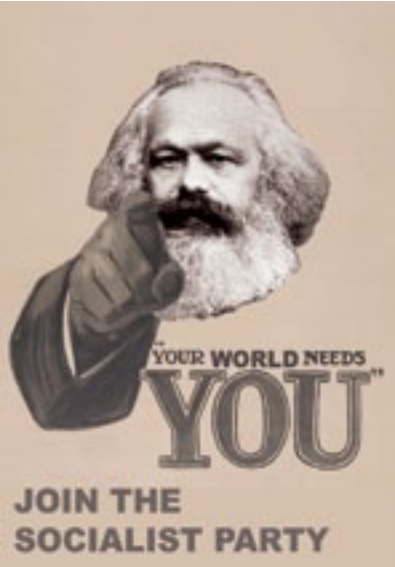
Meetings:

London

Hammersmith

Saturday 24 November
2.00 - 4.00 pm

**The Arrow of Time:
Socialist Consciousness**
Speaker: Vahe Streponian
Venue: Quaker Meeting House,
10 Playfair Avenue, W6 9JT



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Back Page: Portrait of DeSade, 1800’s, Mary Evans, CCBY-SA 3.0

Censorship

The banning of books by governments is a form of censorship which took place in the Roman Empire and continues to this day. 'No book, it seems, is too substantive or too insignificant to be banned in Kuwait. Recent targets of the government's literary censors include an encyclopedia with a picture of Michelangelo's David and a Disney version of *The Little Mermaid*. David had no fig leaf, and the mermaid, alas, wore half a bikini. 'There are no hijab-wearing mermaids' said Shamayel al-Sharikh, a Kuwaiti women's activist. 'The powers that be thought her dress was promiscuous. It's humiliating.' ... Responding to the demands of a growing conservative bloc in Parliament, the government is increasingly banning books. In August, the government acknowledged that it had banned 4,390 books since 2014, hundreds of them this year, including many works of literature that had once been considered untouchable, setting off street demonstrations and online protests' (nytimes.com, 1 October).

No to no platform

Socialists, by contrast, oppose any form of censorship. We have always been prepared to give opponents of socialism a chance to express their views from our platform. This is because we are convinced that our views are right and that this will emerge from full and free debate — and if we are wrong we want to know, so that we can stop wasting our time. Censorship, whether through the legalised violence of the state or that of self-appointed political and/or religious guardians is anti-socialist and anti-working class and must be exposed whenever it rears its ugly head. No view (not even religion) should be exempt from being criticised. The main case against censorship is that it considers that people are too ignorant to decide for themselves and so must be protected from hearing certain views. All censors, actual or would-be, consider themselves a cut above the

rest. They are not corrupted by reading De Sade's *The 120 Days of Sodom* but their servants would be. They are not affected by reading anti-Christian or anti-Muslim writings - Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* is viewed in this way by many faithful - but their followers would be. They are not affected by rants of the Left or Right but other, less enlightened people would be.

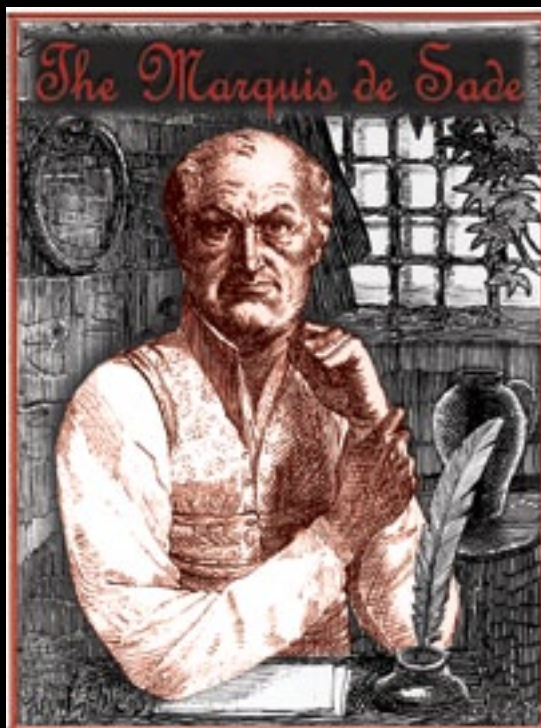
Corrupted by socialism?

The Marquis de Sade died over 200 years ago in an insane asylum, yet much of what he had to say remains relevant today. He championed democracy, was opposed to every form of punishment ('it is far simpler to hang men than to find out why

for both his 'complete and continual denial of the right to property,' and for viewing the struggle in late 18th century French society as being not between 'the Crown, the bourgeoisie, the aristocracy or the clergy, or sectional interests of any of these against one another', but rather all of these 'more or less united against the proletariat.' Gorer thus argued, 'he can with some justice be called the first reasoned socialist.'

End censorship

The Ayatollah Khomeini called in 1989 upon all good Muslims to kill Salman Rushdie for writing *The Satanic Verses*, a novel with a dream sequence in which the prophet Mohammed indulges in a few last temptations of his own. This fatwa resulted in numerous killings, attempted killings, bombings and book burnings. *The Communist Manifesto* was banned by Tsarist Russia and Nazi Germany. Along with volumes of *Capital*, copies were burnt openly in Berlin on 10 May 1933 by students from the Wilhelm Humboldt University, all of them members of right-wing student organisations, and watched by some 70,000 people. Ironically, it was Marx's friend, the poet Heinrich Heine, who wrote some one hundred and ten years earlier 'where they have burned books, they will end in burning human beings' (*Almasor: A Tragedy*, 1823, as translated in *True Religion*, 2003, by Graham Ward). By contrast, '... communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!' (*The Communist Manifesto*, Marx & Engels, 1848).



we condemn them'), saw the class-divided nature of society and sided with 'those who can only get a living by their labour and sweat.' Indeed, Geoffrey Gorer in *The Revolutionary Ideas of the Marquis De Sade* (1964) points out that Sade stood in opposition to contemporary philosophers

FREE LUNCH

